

Readux

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**In Berlin
Day and Night in 1929**

Franz Hessel

Translated from the German by Amanda DeMarco

The Suspect

Walking slowly down bustling streets is a particular pleasure. Awash in the haste of others, it's a dip in the surf. But my dear fellow citizens of Berlin don't make it easy, no matter how nimbly you weave out of their way. I always catch wary glances when I try to play the flâneur among the industrious. I believe they take me for a pick-pocket.

The swift, firm big-city girls with their insatiably open mouths become indignant when my gaze settles at length on their sailing shoulders and floating cheeks. It's not as if they had anything at all against being looked at. But the slow-motion gaze of the harmless observer unnerves them. They notice that with mine, there's nothing "behind!" it.

No, there's nothing behind it. I'd like to linger at first sight. I'd like to capture or recover the first sight of the city in which I live...